

§ 1739.16

(1) 7 CFR part 15, subpart A—Non-discrimination in Federally Assisted Programs of the Department of Agriculture—Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

(2) 7 CFR part 3015—Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations.

(3) 7 CFR part 3017—Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement).

(4) 7 CFR part 3018—New Restrictions on Lobbying.

(5) 7 CFR part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

(6) Certification regarding Architectural Barriers.

(7) Certification regarding Flood Hazard Precautions.

(8) An environmental report, in accordance with 7 CFR part 1794.

(9) Certification that grant funds will not be used to duplicate lines, facilities, or systems providing Broadband Transmission Service.

(10) Federal Obligation Certification on Delinquent Debt.

§ 1739.16 Review of grant applications.

(a) All applications for grants must be delivered to RUS at the address and by the date specified in the NOFA (*see* § 1739.2) to be eligible for funding. RUS will review each application for conformance with the provisions of this part. RUS may contact the applicant for additional information or clarification.

(b) Incomplete applications as of the deadline for submission will not be considered. If an application is determined to be incomplete, the applicant will be notified in writing and the application will be returned with no further action.

(c) Applications conforming with this part will then be evaluated competitively by a panel of RUS employees selected by the Administrator of RUS, and will be awarded points as described in the scoring criteria in § 1739.17. Applications will be ranked and grants awarded in rank order until all grant funds are expended.

(d) Regardless of the score an application receives, if RUS determines that the Project is technically or financially infeasible, RUS will notify the applicant, in writing, and the applica-

tion will be returned with no further action.

§ 1739.17 Scoring of applications.

(a) All eligible applications will receive points for the following scoring criteria:

(1) The rurality of the Project (up to 40 points);

(2) The economic need of the Project's Service Area (up to 30 points); and

(3) The "community-oriented connectivity" benefits derived from the proposed service (up to 30 points).

(b) Scoring criteria:

(1) *The rurality of the project*—up to 40 points.

(i) This criterion will be used to evaluate the rurality of the Community served by the Project, in accordance with the following method of scoring. Rurality shall be determined by the 2000 population data contained in the U.S. Bureau of the Census at <http://factfinder.census.gov>. The following categories are used in the evaluation of rurality:

(A) Level 1 means any Community having a population of less than 500 inhabitants.

(B) Level 2 means any Community having a population of at least 500 and not in excess of 1,000 inhabitants.

(C) Level 3 means any Community having a population over 1,000 and not in excess of 2,000 inhabitants.

(D) Level 4 means any Community having a population over 2,000 and not in excess of 3,000 inhabitants.

(E) Level 5 means any Community having a population over 3,000 and not in excess of 4,000 inhabitants.

(F) Level 6 means any Community having a population over 4,000 and not in excess of 5,000 inhabitants.

(G) Level 7 means any Community having a population over 5,000 and not in excess of 10,000 inhabitants.

(H) Level 8 means any Community having a population over 10,000 and not in excess of 20,000 inhabitants.

(ii) Each application will receive points based on the location of the facilities financed using the definitions in paragraphs (b)(1)(i)(A) through (H) of this section.

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(A) For a Service Area that includes a Level 1 Community, it will receive 40 points.

(B) For a Service Area that includes a Level 2 Community, it will receive 35 points.

(C) For a Service Area that includes a Level 3 Community, it will receive 30 points.

(D) For a Service Area that includes a Level 4 Community, it will receive 25 points.

(E) For a Service Area that includes a Level 5 Community, it will receive 20 points.

(F) For a Service Area that includes a Level 6 Community, it will receive 15 points.

(G) For a Service Area that includes a Level 7 Community, it will receive 10 points.

(H) For a Service Area that includes a Level 8 Community, it will receive 5 points.

(2) *The economic need of the Project Service Area*—up to 30 points.

(i) This criterion will be used to evaluate the economic need of the Service Area. Applicants must utilize the per capita personal income for the Community serviced, as determined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census at <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Applicants will be awarded points as outlined below for service provided in the Community where the per capita personal income (PCI) is less than 70 percent of the national average per capita personal income (NAPCI):

(A) PCI is 75 percent or greater of NAPCI; 0 points;

(B) PCI is less than 75 percent and greater than or equal to 70 percent of NAPCI; 5 points;

(C) PCI is less than 70 percent and greater than or equal to 65 percent of NAPCI; 10 points;

(D) PCI is less than 65 percent and greater than or equal to 60 percent of NAPCI; 15 points;

(E) PCI is less than 60 percent and greater than or equal to 55 percent of NAPCI; 20 points;

(F) PCI is less than 55 percent and greater than or equal to 50 percent of NAPCI; 25 points;

(G) PCPI is less than 50 percent of NAPCI; 30 points;

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) *The “community-oriented connectivity” benefits derived from the proposed service*—up to 30 points.

(i) This criterion will be used to score applications based on the documentation in support of the need for services, benefits derived from the services proposed by the Project, and local community involvement in planning and implementation of the Project. Applicants may receive up to 30 points for documenting the need for services and benefits derived from service as explained in this section.

(ii) RUS will consider:

(A) The extent of the applicant’s documentation explaining the economic, education, health care, and public safety issues facing the community and the applicant’s proposed plan to address these challenges on a community-wide basis;

(B) The extent of the Project’s planning, development, and support by local residents, institutions, and community facilities will be considered. This includes evidence of community-wide involvement, as exemplified in community meetings, public forums, and surveys. In addition, applicants should provide evidence of local residents’ participation in the Project planning and development;

(C) The extent to which the Community Center will be used for instructional purposes including Internet usage, Web-based curricula, and Web page development; and

(D) Web-based community resources enabled or provided by the applicant, such as community bulletin boards, directories, and public web-hosting.

§ 1739.18 Grant documents.

The terms and conditions of grants shall be set forth in grant documents prepared by RUS. The documents shall require the applicant to own all equipment and facilities financed by the grant. Among other matters, RUS may prescribe conditions to the advance of funds that address concerns regarding the Project feasibility and sustainability. RUS may also prescribe terms and conditions applicable to the construction and operation of the Project and the delivery of Broadband Transmission Service to Rural Areas, as well